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# CHAPTER 7



## ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES – ALTERNATIVE C

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## **7.1 NATURAL RESOURCES**

### **7.1.1 Geophysical Resources Impacts – Alternative C**

Analysis of the impacts of Alternative C on geophysical resources at the Monument Grounds was prepared in the same manner as the evaluation of geophysical impacts of Alternative A.

The No Action Alternative would not modify the existing conditions at the Washington Monument Grounds; therefore, implementation of Alternative C would result in no impacts to geophysical resources at the Grounds.

### **7.1.2 Water Resource Impacts –Alternative C**

The No Action Alternative would not modify the existing conditions at the Washington Monument Grounds; therefore, implementation of Alternative C would result in no impacts to water resources at the Grounds.

### **7.1.3 Vegetation Impacts – Alterna tive C**

The No Action Alternative would not modify the existing conditions at the Washington Monument Grounds; therefore, implementation of Alternative C would result in no impacts to vegetation at the Grounds.

### **7.1.4 Wildlife and Aquatic Life Impacts – Alternative C**

The No Action Alternative would not modify the existing conditions at the Washington Monument Grounds; therefore, implementation of Alternative C would result in no impacts to wildlife at the Grounds.

**7.1.5 Hazardous Material Impacts – Alternative C**

Under Alternative C, existing soils would not be disturbed by grading, landscaping, and cut/fill activities or construction of the access screening facilities and improved pathways on the grounds. Existing structures would not be altered exposing or disturbing existing hazardous materials.

**7.1.6 Air Quality Impacts – Alternative C**

Under Alternative C, there would be no impacts to ambient air quality. No mitigation is required.

**7.1.7 Noise Level Impacts**

Under Alternative C, no construction would occur; therefore, there would be no noise impacts. As a result, no mitigation is required.

## **7.2 CULTURAL RESOURCES**

### **7.2.1 Archaeological Resource Impacts – Alternative C**

Alternative C would have no effect on any archaeological sites that may be potentially eligible for nomination to the National Register.

### **7.2.2 Historical Resources Impacts – Alternative C**

The existing ring of temporary concrete jersey barriers around the Monument is detrimental to the historic character and context of the Monument Grounds. In addition, the retention of the modern addition to the Monument Lodge and the interim security structure attached to the east face of the Monument would continue to detract from the integrity of the historic structures.

### **7.2.3 Cultural and Ethnographic Resource Impacts – Alternative C**

Under Alternative C, the presence of the concrete jersey barriers would limit cultural activities and events on the Monument Grounds. Specifically, events that are held on or near the Monument plaza, such as citizenship ceremonies and Washington's Birthday celebrations, would be constrained.

### **7.2.4 Visual Resource Impacts – Alternative C**

By keeping the concrete jersey barriers in place, Alternative C would continue to obstruct views to and from the Washington Monument. This alternative would continue to have a major visual impact on the aesthetic quality and integrity of the Washington Monument Grounds, the plaza, and portions of the Monumental Core.

### 7.3 VISITOR USE AND EXPERIENCE

The methodologies and assumptions utilized to evaluate Alternative C are the same as those for Alternative A. Please refer to Section 5.3.1 for a discussion of these methodologies.

#### 7.3.1 Visitation Patterns Impacts – Alternative C

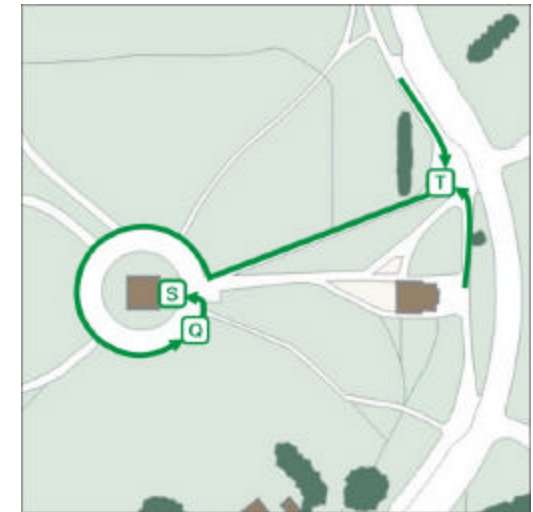
Current visitation patterns would continue under Alternative C. The same number of persons would visit the Monument and the access procedures would be the same.

#### 7.3.2 Visitor Experience Impacts - Alternative C

##### Visitor Access and Orientation

Visitors would continue to arrive at the Monument from other memorials and visitor attractions in Washington, DC. As noted in the visitor use study (Idaho 1998), visitors approach from multiple locations, but particularly from the north and east. Visitors would continue to use sources of information, such as site brochures, ranger staff, and visitor kiosks, to navigate their way around the Monumental Core of the Nation's Capital. On-site orientation information would continue to be limited, with rangers providing much of the available information to visitors outside the Monument.

The existing jersey barriers would continue to cause moderate adverse impacts to the visitor experience. Paths leading up to the Washington Monument would continue to violate accessibility standards, adversely impacting visitors with disabilities. Vehicles that access and park on the Monument Grounds for maintenance, security, and other official purposes would continue to cause similar impacts by littering the landscape surrounding the Monument and inhibiting pedestrian circulation.



Alternative C Site Access Diagram

### Washington Monument Tour

The ticketing and Monument ascent process would continue as described in Chapter 4 of this document (Affected Environment). Visitors would acquire their tickets in advance via reservation or at the ticket kiosk on the morning of their desired tour. For those visitors getting tickets on the day of their tour, most would have to return to the Monument later in the day to actually take the tour. While this is a positive impact from waiting in long lines to access the Monument solely on a first-come, first-serve basis, this delay between ticketing and participation in the tour can result in minor to moderate impacts due to scheduling issues for visitors, particularly if visits to other sites (such as the White House or Holocaust Museum) are planned that also require tickets and timed entries. This impact could be minimized in the future as a greater percentage of the daily tickets become available for reservations and more visitors become aware of the availability of advance tickets.

Prior to ascending the Monument, visitors would have the opportunity to view the Monument and surrounding views of the National Mall as they approached. In addition, all visitors would continue to be able to view the Monument from other sites and locations throughout the National Mall, such as the U.S. Capitol, the Smithsonian museums, and the Lincoln Memorial. However, these approach and distant views would continue to include the concrete jersey barriers and security vehicles that detract from the quality of these views.

Once at the Monument for their tour, visitors with timed tickets would wait in one of the two lines, which denote the half-hour time slot for their scheduled tours. This wait outside in the elements could be pleasant in excellent weather conditions or physically uncomfortable during wind, rain, or hot and humid conditions. During adverse weather conditions, this would continue to detract from a visitor's ability to enjoy and learn about the Monument. As a result, Alternative C would have a moderate adverse impact on visitor experience.

Prior to entering the Monument, the security screening facility would continue to screen each individual visitor in preparation for the tour. Removing personal items would continue to detract from the tour but, in light of recent threats to national security, would continue to be accepted willingly by most visitors.

### **7.3.3 Resource Interpretation Impacts – Alternative C**

The tour features most often enjoyed by Washington Monument visitors would continue in their current configuration. Visitors would be able to view Washington, DC from the top of the Monument and view some of the newly restored commemorative stones as they descend. Limited educational exhibits inside the Monument would also continue to be available for daily viewing.

Based on the 1998 visitor surveys (University of Idaho and West Virginia University), the greatest limitation of the Washington Monument from a visitor experience perspective would continue to be the restricted time and physical space available for quality educational and interpretative programs. Because of the high volume of people that are taken through the Monument daily, NPS rangers would not have the opportunity to provide extensive interpretive programs. Only the 70 seconds during the ascent to the Monument's top and the several minutes on the return trip would continue to be available to focus on the Monument's history, resulting in ongoing minor adverse impacts to visitor experience.

#### **Cumulative Impacts**

Existing tours and interpretive opportunities would continue to be available at museums, memorials, and other NPS sites in the vicinity of the Washington Monument. These opportunities would continue to enhance the visitor experience.

Overall, visitation to the Washington Monument would continue to be adversely affected by the continued use of concrete jersey barriers and an interim screening facility. While the number of visitors able to ascend the Monument would not change, the visual setting for the Monument would continue to be impaired by existing security facilities, thereby detracting from the visitor experience. Overall, Alternative C would have a moderate adverse impact on visitor experience.

## **7.4 SOCIO-ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT**

### **7.4.1 Land Use Impacts – Alternative C**

Alternative C would be consistent with the current land use of the site and the study area. The Monument Grounds would retain their general land use and context as open space used for ceremonial, recreational, educational, and cultural functions. Activities on the Monument Grounds would continue to be conducted pursuant to NPS permitting procedures and requirements. Alternative C would also retain all of the existing buildings and elements on the Grounds for their current uses.

#### Plans and Policies

Alternative C would continue to be inconsistent with the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital, Federal Elements* (1977-1984, updated 1990). The continued presence of the concrete jersey barriers and the interim screening facility would not comply with the Parks, Open Space and Natural Features element and the Preservation and Historic Features element. Alternative C would also not affect NPS regulations about sales, concessions and permitting.

### **7.4.2 Recreation Impacts – Alternative C**

Alternative C would maintain the existing ring of concrete jersey barriers, which disrupt access on the inner pathways. Therefore, this situation poses a continued negative impact to walkers and joggers, who must navigate constrained openings to the pathways.

### **7.4.3 Socio-Economic Resource Impacts – Alternative C**

Since there is no housing located within or adjacent to the study area, there would not be any measurable impacts to housing, community services, social conditions, or population. Since there is no private commercial/retail space within or adjacent to the study area, there would be no measurable impacts to economic resources.



**7.4.4 Infrastructure Impacts – Alternative C**

The No Action Alternative would not modify the existing conditions at the Washington Monument Grounds. Therefore, implementation of Alternative C would result in no impacts to infrastructure at the Grounds.

**7.4.5 Transportation Impacts – Alternative C**

Under Alternative C, the current access paths from 15<sup>th</sup> Street to the base of the Monument would remain in their current location and condition. Existing jersey barriers would continue to disrupt pedestrian access to pathways. Therefore, Alternative C would continue the existing negative circulation impacts on the Grounds and the National Mall.